

TO: The Secretary
Federal communications Commission
1919 M Street NW
Washington DC 20554

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Cc: Chairman William E. Kennard
Commissioner Susan Ness
Commissioner Michael Powell
Commissioner Harold Furchgott-Roth
Commissioner Gloria Tristani

Before the Federal Communications Commission

RE: The Matter of WT Docket No. 98-143: **Restructuring of the Amateur Service, Part 97**

The two most important essential components the FCC should include in the final proposal for RESTRUCTURING OF THE AMATEUR RADIO SERVICE are:

1. Three classes of licenses and one level of code proficiency at 5 words per minute (wpm). The benefits of these changes would be three licenses in place of six, there by reducing the workload for the FCC.
2. It would make the amateur-testing program more in line with the current and future technology.

Provision 1. Number of license classes:

I believe the FCC's proposal doesn't go far enough toward streamlining and modernizing amateur radio. The proposed four classes are still too many. I would like to suggest the following classes be eliminated: Novice, Technician Plus and Advanced and retain the classes of Technician, General and Extra. Current Novice and Technician Plus licensees would then be "grandfathered" to General class operators and the current Advanced class licensees would be "grand fathered" to Extra class operators.

The Technician class should become the only entry class license. It would grant VHF privileges and entails a basic written test, but no Morse requirement. The General class license would grant full HF privileges and would entail a written test and a 5-wpm Morse code requirement. The Extra class license would entail a comprehensive written examination and signify superior achievement and comprehensive knowledge of all areas of theory and amateur practice – however, it would not require an additional level of Morse code proficiency. Frequency allocations can continue to reflect differences in the license classes in an appropriate fashion as they currently do. This system would put the US in alignment with other CEPT countries that, at the most, have only three license classes – two HF and one VHF.

Provision 2. Morse Code Testing at 5 wpm Maximum.

I support the FCC's suggestion to replace the Morse code requirement with more relevant written testing on various aspects of current and developing technology. Today, Morse code is merely one of many modes of communication and there is no reason to single it out as particularly significant or important. A simple 5-wpm Morse test will also remove the necessity of processing and issuing waivers for the handicapped. Eventually, all Morse testing should be eliminated consistent with US obligations under International treaties.

These suggestions, if adopted, would simplify the processing of licensing and ensure, into the twenty-first century, the continuing history of amateur radio service to the country.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken E. Johnson KB4DNC
Mary Johnson KB4JC4
1917 HIGHLAND ST.
RALSTON NE 68127

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Mary G. Johnson
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7917 Highland St.
Raketon, NY 68127

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Mary Jo Wilson
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Raleigh NC 27612

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